

CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A method for organizing a dialogue of messages between a moderator and a number of participants in communication over a network comprising:

- providing, by the moderator, to the participants a question that solicits an answer;
- receiving from each of one or more sending participants a first-round ~~message~~ answer in response to the question;
- grouping at least some of the participants into a plurality of groups;
- for ~~one or more~~ at least a plurality of the sending participants, automatically sending the received first-round ~~message~~ answer to one or more other receiving participants with whom the sending participant is grouped; and
- receiving from each of one or more of the receiving participants a follow-up ~~message~~ in response to the first-round ~~message~~ answer from the sending participant.

Claim 2 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the groups are based on registration information entered by participants.

Claim 3 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the groups are created randomly.

Claim 4 (Currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the groups are created based upon the first-round ~~messages~~ answers and after the first round answers are received.

Claim 5 (Currently amended): The method of claim 1, further comprising repeating the following steps one or more times: sending one or more of the follow-up ~~messages~~ responses to one or more participants with whom the sender of the follow-up ~~message~~ response is grouped and receiving from one or more of such participants who receive the follow-up ~~message~~ response a follow-up ~~message~~ response in response.

Claim 6 (Original): The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving from at least some of the participants an indication that the question should be used for further discussion.

Claim 7 (Currently amended): The method of claim 1, further comprising automatically routing ~~messages~~ answers from a particular round to a specialist in the subject matter of the message.

Claim 8 (Currently amended): A system for organizing messages created among a moderator and a number of participants in communication over a network, the system comprising:

a select audience module for grouping at least some of the participants into groups;

a question module for ~~providing a moderator to provide~~ to participants a question that solicits an answer, receiving from one or more of the participants ~~a message~~ an answer in response to the question, automatically sending each of one or more of the ~~messages~~ answers to one or more receiving participants with whom the sender of the message is grouped into one of a plurality of groups, and receiving from one or more of the receiving participants a ~~message in~~ response to the ~~message~~ answer received by the receiving participant.

Claim 9 (Original): The system of claim 8, wherein the system can repeat the process of receiving and sending messages among grouped participants as desired.

Claim 10 (Original): The system of claim 8, wherein the select audience module groups participants randomly.

Claim 11 (Currently amended): The system of claim 8, wherein the select audience module groups participants based on the ~~message~~ answer sent in response to the question.

Claim 12 (Previously presented): The system of claim 17, wherein the select audience module uses registration information to group participants.

Claim 13 (Original): The system of claim 8, further comprising a chat module that allows participants to send messages in real time over the network while respecting usage rules based on user roles.

Claim 14 (Original): The system of claim 8, further comprising a threaded messaging module that allows messages to be sent, posted, and archived.

Claim 15 (Original): The system of claim 14, wherein messages can be promoted from the question module to the threaded messaging module.

Claim 16 (Original): The system of claim 8, further comprising a chat module that allows participants to send messages in real time over the network, and a threaded messaging module that allows messages to be sent, posted, and archived.

Claim 17 (Previously presented): The system of claim 8, further comprising a registration module for obtaining participant registration information.

Claim 18 (New): The system of claim 1, wherein the question is provided with information indicating a number of rounds or responses and a due date for the first round.

Claim 19 (New): The system of claim 1, wherein the question is one of a short answer question, poll, or multiple choice question, with a request for additional comments.

Claim 20 (New): The system of claim 1, further comprising, after receiving the follow-up message, forming a new set of groups and providing the follow-up message for each participant to other participants in that participant's new group.